

Message Text

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TAGS: DOEV, ODIP, EK, VT, UR, SP, CH, CU

SUBJ: VIEWS OF PAPAL PRO-NUNCIO ON EQUATORIAL GUINEA

1. ON DEC 29, 1977 THE AMBASSADOR HAD A CONVERSATION WITH MONSIGNOR UHAC THE APOSTOLIC PRO-NUNCIO. NEARLY ALL OF CONVERSATION CENTERED ABOUT THE VISIT OF THE PAPAL PRO-NUNCIO TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA. HE ASKED FOR AN AUDIENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT AND ANOTHER WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, BUT SUCCEEDED IN NEITHER. HE DID A GREAT DEAL OF WAITING AROUND, MEANWHILE TALKING WITH THE PERSONNEL IN THE CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN WHICH HE STAYED. WHEN HE WENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER HE FOUND NO ONE THERE, ALTHOUGH THE ROOM WAS OPEN AND DOCUMENTS WERE ON THE DESK ALONG WITH OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND OFFICIAL SEALS. HIS EXPLANATION WAS THAT PEOPLE ARE NOT PAID FOR THREE OR FOUR MONTHS AT A TIME AND MUST SOMETIMES LEAVE THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES TO EARN A LIVING ELSEWHERE. (COMMENT: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO WORK ON COCOA FARMS AND MINISTRY EMPLOYEES MIGHT HAVE BEEN DOWN ON FARM.)

2. HE WAS NOT FREE TO TRAVEL AS FAR AS HE WISHED; THERE ARE
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ROADBLOCKS WHICH STOP EVERYONE WHO HAS NO PERMISSION FOR A TRIP. HE TALKED WITH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, JACQUES FOURIER, WHO WAS HELPFUL AND WHO MADE TWO INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS: THE FIRST WAS THAT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE WELCOMED BY THE PRESIDENT; A VISIT BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR WOULD SUFFICE TO REESTABLISH RELATIONS. THE SECOND WAS THAT WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE ABANDONED EQUATORIAL GUINEA TO ITS PRESENT CLOSE RELATIONS WITH

CHINA, THE USSR, NORTH KOREA, AND CUBA. (COMMENT: THESE THEMES HAVE BEEN RAISED BEFORE BY MASIE AND FRENCH, RESPECTFULLY) THE CHINESE APPEAR TO BE THE FAVORITIES, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE CIRCUMSPECTION OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AND THEIR ABILITY TO LOOK AS IF THEY ARE NOT EXPLOITING EQUATORIAL GUINEA. THE CUBANS ARE VIEWED AS CONDESCENDING TO AFRICANS AND DISRESPECTFUL TOWARD AFRICAN WOMEN. E.G. TRIED HAVING CUBANS REPLACE DEPARTING SPANISH TEACHERS BUT FOUND THAT, EXCEPT FOR SPEAKING SPANISH, THE CUBANS WERE CONSIDERED UNQUALIFIED FOR TEACHING AND UNPLEASANT IN HUMAN RELATIONS.

3. EAST GERMANY AND THE OAU HAVE CLOSED THEIR OFFICES IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA. THE RESIDENT AMBASSADOR OF GABON IS CONTINUALLY IN HOT WATER WITH THE EQUATORIAL GUINEANS. NIGERIA AND CAMEROON ARE REPRESENTED AT THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES LEVEL. THE CAMEROONIAN CHARGE, 2ND SECTY SALIFOU NSANGOU, HAS BEEN THERE FOR EIGHT YEARS. ABOUT 2500 CAMEROONIANS LIVE AND WORK ON THE ISLAND, A GOOD MANY OF THEM IN THE HOMES AND OFFICES OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT IS RELUCTANT TO PERMIT ITS CITIZENS CONTACT WITH FOREIGNERS. THE GOVERNMENT DISCOURAGES EMIGRATION AND HAS BEEN KNOWN TO BREAK UP SMALL FISHING BOATS WHICH CAN EVACUATE PERSONNEL, LEAVING LOCAL FISHERMEN WITHOUT A MEANS OF EARNING A LIVELIHOOD.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE MARKETS, THE PRO NUNCIO SAID THAT SHOPPERS HAD TO BUY A PICTURE OF THE PRESIDENT BEFORE PURCHASING GOODS.
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5. SINCE THE PRO NUNCIO IS NOT ACCREDITED TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA, HIS PASSPORT WAS TAKEN FROM HIM AND KEPT FOR THREE DAYS (HE WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WISH TO RECEIVE HIM AND THAT IT IS OPPOSED TO RECOGNITION OF THE CHURCH, ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT IS NOT AN AGNOSTIC). ONE CUSTOMS OFFICER ASKED TO INSPECT HIS BAGGAGE BUT A CABINET MINISTER WHO ARRIVED ON THE SAME PLANE DIRECTED THAT HIS BAGS SHOULD NOT BE OPENED.

6. THE MIDDLE CLASS, MADE UP OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE, IS VERY SMALL. PRESUMABLY A NUMBER OF LOCAL DOCTORS AND OTHERS HAVE ESCAPED (HIS TERMINOLOGY). OFFICIAL POLICY IS THAT ANYONE CAN LEAVE WHO WANTS TO, BUT A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT IS PUT FORTH TO MAKE IT DIFFICULT.

7. CACAO USED TO BE A MAJOR EXPORT WITH 40,000 TONS A YEAR PRODUCED. THE PRODUCTION HAS FALLEN TO FIVE TONS A YEAR AND WILL DECLINE FURTHER BECAUSE THE TREES ARE NOT BEING REPLACED. THERE IS SOME EXPLOITATION OF THE SUPPLY OF WOOD IN THE FORESTS BUT THE SOAP FACTORY HAS HAD TO CEASE PRODUCTION BECAUSE IT IS NOT PERMITTED TO IMPORT AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT.

8. THE CHINESE AID PROGRAM INCLUDES DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH WORKERS BUILDING A TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUILDING AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION. THEY ARE SAID TO HAVE RECENTLY COMPLETED A ROAD OF 120 KILOMETERS. THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS ARE MILITARY ADVISERS BUT THERE ARE ADDITIONAL SOVIET PERSONNEL WORKING AS TECHNICIANS. IT IS SAID THAT AT TIMES THERE ARE UP TO FOUR AEROFLOT FLIGHTS A WEEK FOR CREW CHANGE AND SHIP RESUPPLY.

9. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS DETERIORATED WITH THE DEPARTURE OF MANY OF THE BEST-QUALIFIED AND MOST EXPERIENCED TEACHERS. THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT THIRTY SPANISH TEACHERS REMAINING.

10. THE CHINESE ARE BRINGING IN GOODS; THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR ACCOMPANIED THE PRESIDENT TO THE WAREHOUSE WHERE THE GOODS WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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KEPT. AT ONE POINT HE ASKED MASIE WHY HE DID NOT PUT THE GOODS ON THE MARKET AND WAS TOLD THAT IF THEY WERE PUT ON THE MARKET, PEOPLE WOULD BUY THEM ALL AND THERE WOULD BE NONE LEFT FOR THE WAREHOUSE. APPARENTLY THE IMPORTED AID GOODS ARE TREATED AS A PERSONAL STORE TO BE DISPENSED AS THE PATRIARCH OF A FAMILY WOULD DISTRIBUTE LARGESSE AMONG ITS MEMBERS. SMYTHE

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